

Reopening School Libraries During COVID-19

School libraries are critical to teaching and learning for all students. It is important that school librarians continue to provide services to our students, teachers, and families via remote and blended learning practices. This **includes providing access to print and non-print resources**, as well as instruction in the use of resources.

School library furniture, fixtures, books, technology equipment, tools and supplies all have the potential for transmitting viruses. Following the research and [recommendations](#) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the [Institute of Museum and Library Services Reopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums \(REALM\) Project](#), Fort Worth ISD Library Media Services developed a **reopening checklist** to mitigate the potential transmission of the novel coronavirus through school libraries.



Reopening Checklist

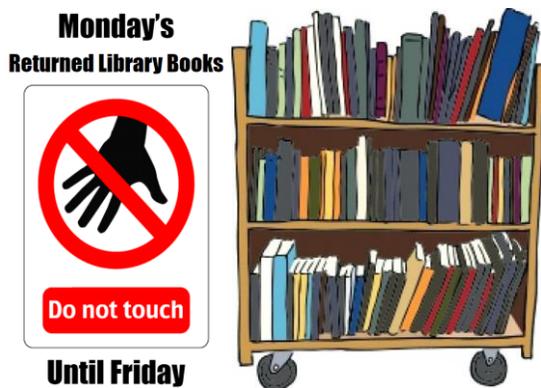
- ✓ Inventory library collection to restore missing data.
- ✓ Create system and space to collect, separate, and quarantine returned library books.
- ✓ Setup touchless self-checkout station.
- ✓ Print barcode label for each student and teacher to facilitate touchless self-checkout. Affix labels to cards or folders.
- ✓ Put away shared library items such as shelf markers and computer peripherals to mitigate possible transmission of virus.
- ✓ Rearrange library to allow for social distancing. Use low-tack tape and signage to designate appropriate distancing.
- ✓ Setup available PPE in library (sanitizer, gloves, clear barriers, etc).

Quarantine Returned Library Books

According to CDC epidemiologists, librarians do not need to disinfect paper-based items such as books. The virus, if present, would be in very low quantities and die off rather quickly. Also, disinfecting wipes can damage paper and cardboard.

Librarians, however, know that **students sneeze and cough directly into books**, so the CDC recommends leaving returned books untouched for a minimum of 24 hours. REALM Project testing for the detection of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) reveals that the virus is **undetectable after 3 days on unstacked books**.

Stacking books keeps the virus alive longer. Results of the latest round of testing reveal that after 6 days of quarantine, the virus was still detectable on books that were stacked together.



Library Media Services recommends that school librarians develop a system for collecting and **quarantining returned library books for a minimum of 72 hours**. Book trucks, bins, boxes or library tables should be utilized to contain returned books each day. Librarians should label each day's collection with the date that the books can be made available to students again.

Library Books for Remote Learners

Students who continue online learning from home have the availability to search [their school's library catalog](#) and request to check out specific books. Library Media Services encourages all campuses to consider implementing curbside delivery of library books to students learning from home. Additional online resources can be accessed through the [Library Media – Online Database Resources](#) app on ClassLink.

The March 2020 malware attack to the District's networks resulted in the loss of all library inventory and circulation data, as well as the school's library website. Each library collection must be inventoried to restore catalog data.

- **An inventory must be completed before checkout to students and teachers can begin in October.**
- Families will not be held financially responsible for unreturned library books from SY 2019-2020.

Touchless, Self-Checkout utilizes a stationary barcode scanner to input the student ID number and the barcode number of each library book being checked out. Students do not touch a keyboard or keypad to enter their names or ID numbers.



If barcode labels are not used for individual students, an **alternative** is for a library staff member to type the name or ID number for each student and then allow the student to scan their library books.